more for my comfort rather than her own. *I* didn't want to be doing this, after all.

"But I want to," she said. "I want to do this. It will make you—it will make *us* happy."

I rose up off her body. "Maybe this isn't the right time," I said. Looking down at her, I then realized how lovely she was and how little I knew of her. How little she *really* knew of me. I thought of George and a tingle stirred in my loins. I realized I didn't desire penetrating her. I was doing this for my reputation. I thought I needed to walk away with a bloody sheet to prove what—that I could break a hymen? I had no thought about consequences. There was no condom to prevent pregnancy, no pills being taken that I knew of. We were entangled in limbs we couldn't name, dry-throated, sweaty, pursuing different objectives in the afternoon bed we had stolen. My erection slowly fell. I lowered myself onto her again and kissed her lightly on the lips.

"We should probably get dressed," I encouraged her. "Someone might come home soon." That was the last and only time we were naked together. Not long after, we stopped seeing each other romantically.

A year later, she began dating an older boy around school. We saw each other less often, and then one day I saw her in a maternity blouse. I believe she finished school—I'm not sure—but by that time she wasn't my concern. I was seeing another "good girl," walking her home, holding her hand, pretending I was consumed by love—safe, by all appearances, from being identified as a faggot.

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